

REMARKS

The present Amendment amends claims 1, 10, 16 and 17, leaves claims 3-8 and 12-15 unchanged and cancels claims 2 and 11. Therefore, the present application has pending claims 1, 3-8, 10 and 12-17.

Claims 10 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Various amendments were made throughout claims 10 and 17 to bring them into conformity with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Therefore, Applicants submit that this rejection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Specifically, amendments were made to claims 10 and 17 to overcome the objections noted by the Examiner in paragraphs 2-5 of the Office Action.

The Examiner's cooperation is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' attorney by telephone should any further indefinite matter be discovered so that appropriate amendments may be made.

In paragraph 18 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 2 and 11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Amendments were made to claim 1 to include the subject matter of claim 2 and amendments were made to claim 10 to include the subject matter of claim 11. Therefore, claims 1 and 10 are allowable as indicated by the Examiner being that they include claims 2 and 11 respectively.

Since claims 1 and 10 are allowable, claims 3-8 which depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 and claims 12-17 which depend directly or indirectly from claim 10 are now allowable being that they now depend from allowable base claims.

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to indicate that claims 1, 3-8, 10 and 12-17 are allowable over the prior art of record.

Claims 1, 4-8, 10 and 13-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Nessett (U.S. Patent No. 5,968,176); and claims 3 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nessett in view of Crichton (U.S. Patent No. 6,104,716). These rejections are rendered moot being that claims 1, 3-8, 10 and 12-17 were placed in condition for allowance by including the subject matter which the Examiner indicated as being allowable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

In light of the above, Applicants submit that claims 1, 3-8, 10 and 12-17 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of the present application based on claims 1, 3-8, 10 and 12-17 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the

U.S. Application No. 09/314,629

deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No.

01-2135 (referencing attorney docket no. 501.37212X00).

Respectfully submitted,

ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl I. Brundidge', is written over a horizontal line.

Carl I. Brundidge
Registration No. 29,621

CIB/sdb
(703) 312-6600